

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 00657 110829Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 /017 W

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R 110715Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7989

INFO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL FOKOAKA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL SURABAY

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 0657

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, ETRD, EINV, ASEAN, PFOR, US, TH

SUBJECT: EAST ASIA COMMERCIAL OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 00487

1. THE APCAC GENERAL MEETING IN BANGKOK FEBRUARY 25-28
WILL HOPEFULLY PROVIDE THE FORUM FOR RESOLUTION OF THE
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ORGANIZATION'S INTERNAL DIFFERENCES. THE CHAMBER HERE
SUPPORTS THE CONTINUATION OF APCAC AND BELIEVES THE
PRESENT DISSENSION STEMS FROM SEVERAL CAUSES:

A. INDIVIDUAL AMCHAMS HAVE EXPRESSED POSITIONS WHICH
CONFLICT WITH OTHER AMCHAMS; OFTEN TO A DEGREE THAT
ANOTHER AMCHAM FEELS IS DAMAGING. APCAC HAS NOT DEVELOPED
A MEANS BY WHICH TO RATIONALIZE THESE DEVERGENT OPINIONS.

B. THERE IS CONCERN THAT APCAC DOES NOT REFLECT THE OPINION OF INDIVIDUAL AMCHAMS, BUT RATHER EXPRESSES THE VIEWS AND POSITIONS OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMEN. THIS PROBLEM CAME UP FOR DISCUSSION IN JAKARTA WITH A SUGGESTED SOLUTION THAT THE LOCUS OF POWER AND DIRECTION BE SQUARELY PLACED ON THE DIRECTORS OF APCAC WHO ARE THE AMCHAM PRESIDENTS AND THAT THE VICE CHAIRMEN BE APPOINTED ONLY WHEN AND AS NEEDED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES. NO RESOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM WAS REACHED.

C. SEVERAL AMCHAMS HAVE QUESTIONED THE VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF APCAC VERSUS THE EXPENDITURE INVOLVED. THE PRIMARY PROBLEM HERE IS THAT APCAC MUST PULL ITSELF TOGETHER TO ADDRESS MEANINGFUL ISSUES AND THEN DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE MEANS TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION AND ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES.

2. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES APCAC HAS BEEN BENEFICIAL IN ESPOUSING OBJECTIVES OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN IN THE REGION AND DOES NOT FIND IT SURPRISING THAT SOME POLARIZATION HAS OCCURRED, FREQUENTLY REFLECTING THE POLITICAL BIAS OF THE HOST COUNTRY IN WHICH A PARTICULAR CHAMBER HAS TO OPERATE. RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO DEVISE PROCEDURES FOR IN-HOUSE RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES IS WIDESPREAD IN APCAC AND LEADS US TO CONCLUDE THAT NEW APPROACHES WILL BE SOUGHT DURING THE BANGKOK MEETING. SOME OF THE MORE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES, PARTICULARLY ON THE PRC-TAIWAN PROBLEM, WILL NOT BE RESOLVED IN THE SHORT TERM. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR APCAC MEMBERS TO AGREE TO SHELVE THE MORE INTRACTABLE DIFFERENCES FOR A TIME AND TURN THE ORGANIZATIONS
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ATTENTION TO MORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND REALIZABLE GOALS.

3. THE EMBASSY AND CHAMBER HERE IN THAILAND ARE COMMITTED TO COOPERATION AND THE STRENGTHENING OF AN ALREADY CLOSE AND PRODUCTIVE ASSOCIATION. WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND THIS COOPERATION ON A REGIONAL BASIS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF EXCHANGES DURING APCAC GENERAL MEETINGS AND SUCH OPPORTUNITIES AS THE FEBRUARY 24 SESSION DURING THE COMMERCIAL OFFICERS' CONFERENCE IN SINGAPORE. SHOULD THE FORTHCOMING MEETING PROVE PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS WITH APCAC SHOULD BE INSTITUTIONALIZED.
WHITEHOUSE

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